

CLAIMS

- 1 1. A system identification module comprising:
 - 2 a housing;
 - 3 a persistent memory for storing system specific data associated with a communications
 - 4 system having a backplane; and
 - 5 a module connector for coupling to and removal from the backplane connector, the
 - 6 module connector and the housing defining an enclosure surrounding the persistent memory, the
 - 7 module connector electrically connecting the persistent memory to the backplane connector.
- 1 2. The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the housing has an outer surface,
2 the outer surface having a ridged portion for grasping the system identification module when the
3 system identification module is coupled to or removed from the backplane connector.
- 1 3. The system identification module of claim 1 further comprising a shelf processor, the
2 shelf processor controlling the programming of the persistent memory and the reading of data
3 from the persistent memory.
- 1 4. The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the persistent memory is a
2 programmable read-only memory device.
- 1 5. The system identification module of claim 4 wherein the programmable read-only
2 memory device is an electrically erasable programmable read-only memory device.
- 1 6. The system identification module of claim 4 wherein the programmable read-only
2 memory device is a 2-pin electrically erasable programmable read-only memory device.

1 7. The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the persistent memory comprises a
2 partitioned memory configured to receive data according to predefined data fields.

1 8. The system identification module of claim 1 wherein address information, data and
2 power are transmitted to the persistent memory over a single input pin.

1 9. The system identification module of claim 1 wherein the module connector comprises a
2 serial connector.

1 10. The system identification module of claim 9 wherein the serial connector is an RS-232
2 connector.

1 11. A communications shelf comprising:

2 a backplane having a backplane connector;

3 a plurality of communications cards in communication with each other through the
4 backplane; and

5 a system identification module coupled to the backplane through the backplane
6 connector, the system identification module comprising:

7 a housing;

8 a persistent memory for storing system specific data associated with the
9 communications shelf; and

10 a module connector for coupling to and removal from the backplane connector,
11 the module connector and the housing defining an enclosure surrounding the persistent

12 memory, the module connector electrically connecting the persistent memory to the
13 backplane connector.